



HOPE

# C.A.T.S. *Christmas 2018*

## BUMPER NEWSLETTER

Long may C.A.T.S. continue to give hope  
to Thyroid patients everywhere

### Welcome,

C.A.T.S. send a warm welcome out to everyone especially our new members who joined us recently. We hope everyone is keeping well. Winter is fast approaching so don't forget to look at our preparing for winter item. As usual the office has been busy with a lot of phone calls and e-mails coming in. As each day goes by there seems to be more new patients diagnosed with Thyroid issues. Thyroid problems tend to be thought of as an older patient's problem, however there are lots of younger patients who are also affected. Getting a diagnosis is quite often one of the hardest things for many patients, so it is quite rewarding to receive phone calls from patients to say that the information we gave them has helped them get a diagnosis.

### Thyroid Friends/Gold stars

Don't forget to look out for a gold star form in your newsletter. This indicates that your membership subscription is due soon. Please can you consider renewing your membership as this is the main source of funds for us. Membership subscription currently costs £6.00 for a year this includes 4 newsletters, access to our specialist Thyroid advisors, website advice, information leaflets. Free confidential advice and support via our telephone helpline, invites to all our public events plus there are many other benefits of supporting us.



## Vitamin D

Supplementing with Vitamin D has been in the news recently so I thought I would say a little bit about the subject. For the benefit of anyone who missed the headlines, a study had been done to assess if patients would benefit from taking Vitamin D to improve bone strength. This seems to have been a study from several small groups of patients and from the details of the study the patients were just past the menopause (a marker for Osteoporosis), however there was no information to say if the patients had been diagnosed with Osteoporosis or not. There was also no information to say if the patients had good levels of Magnesium, Vitamin K2 and Calcium, as all these nutrients are needed along with Vitamin D for strong bone formation. In an ideal world these nutrients would come from a good balanced diet, however many Thyroid patients can't or don't eat a good balanced diet because of gastric or other health issues.

Vitamin D is an important nutrient, and it also helps with many other body functions, so it was disappointing that the study seemed to imply that Vitamin D supplements were a waste of money if you wanted to improve your bone density scores. Lessening your risk of breaking bones is a complex issue and some patients have found that even by taking the treatments such as Alendronic Acid (this is a prescribed treatment for Osteoporosis) they have still ended up breaking bones. While other patients have told me Alendronic Acid has helped improve their bone strength. Most patients are deficient in Vitamin D but you will need to have a blood test to confirm this. Many doctors do not test your Vitamin D levels and just assume that you will benefit by taking a supplement. If you need further advice about this subject please contact your GP who can advise you what their feelings are about Vitamin D and if you should take a supplement or not.



## Blood Test ranges for Morecambe Bay

In the last newsletter I reported that the ranges for Thyroid blood tests had changed in the Morecambe Bay area. The new range now being used are (FT4 7.9-14) and the (TSH 0.57 – 3.60). Previously C.A.T.S. had recommended that patients tried to get their FT4 levels around 15 and the TSH levels around 1.5. This indicated that your Thyroid was well balanced and that you had good levels of Thyroid hormones in your body. Unfortunately, this advice is now incorrect. I have received several phone calls from patients who have been told they are overmedicated and need to reduce their dose of medication. If you have had to reduce your dose can you let me know, as some patients have contacted me to say they are not feeling well on the lower dose, even though their FT4 and TSH is now within the new range. I will be able to advise further once I have more information on this subject.

## Osteoporosis

In the last newsletter I wrote about this condition (known as the silent killer) simply because you do not know you have developed the condition until a small trip or slip results in a broken bone. Quite often it is the hip bones that break. In other case's wrist or ankle bones can break. Some patients find that their spine collapses and squashes the internal organs resulting in a lot of pain. It is often thought of as an 'old lady' health condition however many patients as young as 20 are now being diagnosed with Osteoporosis. C.A.T.S. are not sure why this is happening as the reasons for developing Osteoporosis can be varied; genetics, or poor diets, certain health conditions can all be the cause. Men can also be affected by this condition. C.A.T.S. advise if you are worried about developing Osteoporosis please seek your doctor's advice. You will need to have a bone scan (DEXA scan) to diagnose Osteoporosis



## Living with a Thyroid condition

C.A.T.S. always say that Thyroid problems can be quite complex. There are over 300 symptoms and health conditions that link in with Thyroid dysfunction. Not everyone will get all these symptoms and in fact everyone's Thyroid journey is different. Many ladies will get a diagnosis around their menopause but, this doesn't always happen to everyone. Some patients find diagnosis can come in their teens or early twenties. However, no matter when you get diagnosed C.A.T.S have the following plan to help you get to grips with the complex issues that a diagnosis brings.

STEP 1 - Getting a diagnosis this can often be the most difficult step

STEP 2 - Understand Thyroid dysfunction and be Thyroid aware. Learn as much as you can about Thyroid conditions, the more you know the easier it will be to manage your condition

STEP 3 - Hypothyroid (underactive) ----- Hyperthyroid (overactive)  
Understand the difference between the 2 conditions, such as the symptoms and treatments etc

STEP 4 - Learn how other related health conditions link in with Thyroid dysfunction

STEP 5 - Communicate with your GP and other health advisors

STEP 6 - Develop a healthy eating plan. Develop an easy exercise plan such as walking, swimming or any other low-level exercises, as this helps keep the body supple and the joints flexible. Learn to pace yourself. Don't forget to have regular blood tests. Develop a holistic approach, your mind and body in total harmony. Explore extra therapies, such as massage, reflexology and relaxation. Research shows these therapies can help to balance your Thyroid and give you a greater sense of wellbeing.

## Coffee and Chat meetings

Following on from our meet up at Morrison's café in Barrow in September, Gill and I have arranged the following dates for your diary next year

March, Grange -over- Sands (Hazelmere café) date to be arranged

April, Ulverston (Home and Finance café) date to be arranged

May, Kendal (Café Nero) date to be arranged

June, Barrow in Furness (Tesco's café) date to be arranged

July, Lancaster, date and venue to be arranged

August, Millom (Home and Finance café) date to be arranged

September, Windermere (Booths café) date to be arranged

All details of venues and dates will be confirmed in our Spring news up-date  
This will be sent out around the first week of March 2019



### **C.A.T.S. Wishes for 2019**

- 1 May your health improve
  - 2 May your friends be blessed
  - 3 May your family be loved
  - 4 May your finances multiply
  - 5 May your pain be less
  - 6 May your worries disappear
  - 7 May you be blessed
- ([lessonslearnedinlife.com](http://lessonslearnedinlife.com))*



## T3 (Liothyronine)

Many patients have never heard about this important Thyroid hormone. T3 is the active hormone that our body uses for every single action that takes place with-in the body, our Thyroid glands produce T4 (Thyroxine) this is then converted to T3. However, in a small group of patients this conversion process does not work very well, because of this many of these patients will need to take T3 as an additional treatment.

There are many reasons why the conversion process goes wrong, such as a genetic predisposition when you have inherited a faulty gene such as the DIO2 gene. Patients who have had their Thyroid glands removed because of Thyroid cancer or other reasons may find the conversion process does not work for them. Other hormone in-balances in the body, can also cause problems balancing your T3.

Up to September 2016, T3 was available as an extra medication from the NHS. Sadly, due to the massive increase in price that the drug companies are charging the NHS, very few patients are able to get T3 as a prescription drug now. The present guidelines state that if you have been prescribed T3 in the past and you have a clinical need for it, you can still get T3 prescribed. However, this must be done via an NHS Endocrinologist. The Endocrinologist has to write to your GP, who then has to ask the CCG (Clinical Commissioning Group) for permission to prescribe T3 to the patient. As you can see there are a whole lot of hoops to jump through if you want to get T3 via the NHS. Since 2016 I have spoken to many patients who are having to buy their T3 from various countries via the internet. C.A.T.S. warn that if you do go down this road, please take care as not all companies are reputable. If you want more advice about T3 please contact me at the office.



## Preparing for Winter

As winter approaches, it is always wise to prepare for winter. Thyroid patients need to take extra care as our immune systems are not as good at fighting off the cold and flu germs that invade our bodies during the winter months.



- \*\* Taking the herb Echinacea along with a Vitamin C supplement, plus the minerals Zinc and Selenium all help to boost out immune systems. For an extra boost add a Garlic supplement or even extra Garlic to your diet. (please check with your doctor or pharmacist before taking supplements, as some of these can react against any medication you take.)
- \*\* Eat plenty of hot nourishing foods such as casseroles, soups and stews, these are easy to prepare, and if you make a double portion you can always freeze some for another day.
- \*\* Wearing extra layers of clothes (three or four thin layers are better than one thick one) Our body heat gets trapped between the layers and helps to keep us warmer.
- \*\* If you can't afford to heat the whole house, then always make sure that one room is heated (between 18c and 21c is the recommended temperature.)
- \*\* Getting up often, and walking around the room will stop your joints stiffening up.
- \*\* Drinking plenty of hot drinks will help keep your body's core temperature in the normal range.
- \*\* Last of all don't forget to get your flu jab. Doctors do not send out reminders now so put a note in your diary so you don't forget. They are still available now.



## Website and Facebook Page

While we are not having our meetings, did you know that there is lots of helpful information on our website go to --- [www.cumbriancats.co.uk](http://www.cumbriancats.co.uk) you will be surprised how much information is available. However, if you can't find the information you need, please contact me. We also regularly update our Facebook page with our news up-dates [www.facebook.com/pagesCumbria-Advisory-Thyroid-Service-C.A.T.S./13874768249218](https://www.facebook.com/pages/Cumbria-Advisory-Thyroid-Service-C.A.T.S./13874768249218) is the link for this. Please also like and share these links to spread the word about Thyroid disease.

## Petitions News

It is now almost 2 years since we launched our petition to have T3 reinstated as a prescription drug. During this time, we have collected over 3,000 supporters. We feel this is a wonderful achievement for a small support group such as C.A.T.S. However, we would like to see this total increase so if you have not signed this petition can you please consider doing so. The link for this is <https://www.change.org/p/the-secretary-of-state-for-health-jeremy-hunt-reinstate-T3-liothyronine-as-a-prescription-drug-available-on-the-nhs>. There is also a national petition, the ITT group (Improve Thyroid Treatments) is fighting for the T3 issues along with better care for Thyroid patients. Their petition has gathered over 35,000 supporters. They have also been successful in lobbying Parliament about the T3 issues. Please consider signing their petition as in this country Thyroid treatment has become a postcode lottery, with many patients not receiving the care they need. <https://change.org/p/itt-campaign-group-improve-thyroid-treatment-for-millions-of-people-stop-the-withdrawal-of-t3> is the link you need.



## Group appointments with your GP

This is a new idea being trailed by the NHS in some areas of the country. The idea is that a small group of patients who have all been diagnosed with the same health condition (eg diabetes, heart disease or arthritis) will all meet together along with a GP and other medical professionals. The patients can then discuss any concerns they have regarding their health condition. This will cut down on the GP'S time as they will be able to see a group of 8-10 patients all at once, instead of the individual 10 minutes appointments that are usually available. However, the 10 minutes appointments will still be available for any patients who require them. How do you feel about this idea? If you would like to comment on this please feel free to send your comments to the office.

## Over the counter remedies warning



As the cold and flu season starts, we thought that we would just remind everyone that some over the counter remedies can be dangerous if taken with certain medications. Some cold cure remedies have ingredients in them that can give symptoms of over-active thyroid to some patients. Many patients may reach for natural remedies when faced with cold and flu symptoms. However, Garlic and some other herbal remedies can have a blood thinning effect, so you need to be cautious if you take blood thinning medication. Many Thyroid patients have to take a variety of medications because of other health

problems. Research has shown that the more medications you take, the more likely you are to get reactions or side effects from some of them. If you want to try any of the over the counter remedies available, C.A.T.S advise that you should seek the advice of your GP or pharmacist first, as it is better to be safe, rather than sorry.



## Gastric Issues and Thyroid

Research is showing that we need a good balanced gastric system to allow our Thyroid glands to work properly. Many Thyroid patients do suffer with gastric problems such as IBS (Irritable Bowel Syndrome) this causes wind, bloating, tummy cramps and irregular bowel movement. Gastritis (excessive gas often caused by acid or poorly digested foods); Coeliac Disease (not able to digest gluten); Diverticulitis (pockets of inflammation that form in the bowel) or Gastric Reflux (acid and gas that flows back from the stomach, up the upper part of the gastric tract.)



All of these common health problems can be made worse by an in-balance of your gut flora. An easy way to re-balance this is by supplementing your diet with a pro-biotic. Kefir a fermented yogurt, or any fermented foods will help to do this. You can make Kefir yourself or you can also buy it ready made from health food shops. If the taste of Kefir is too acidic for your liking try adding half a teaspoon of honey. Or a small amount of Stevia (a natural sweetener) can be added. Stevia tastes very sweet so don't use too much.

Pre-biotics are also helpful, these are a group of complex carbohydrates that can increase the intake of dietary fibre. Bananas, parsnips, garlic and asparagus will help to do this but you can also buy a pre-biotics supplement from a health food store. There are also digestive enzyme supplements that help with digestive issues. Don't forget to ask your doctor before taking any supplements.

I have been using Kefir for several months now, and have found a big improvement in my gastric issues, so it is worth a try to see if it works for you.



## C.A.T.S. Information

Over the 20+ years C.A.T.S. has been running as a support group, we have collected a huge amount of information on Thyroid issues. Most of this information has been gained from the training we have done, plus our own experiences, and the research work we do. This enables us to give advice to anyone who contacts us, and also through our newsletters. However, it is important to remember that everyone is different, and a suggestion that works for one patient may not work for another. C.A.T.S. advisors do not hold any medical qualifications, so it is important to seek your doctor's advice before following any advice from C.A.T.S. We can't and do not accept any responsibility as it is impossible to ensure that all information is relevant to every individual.

## Passing Thoughts

*"We can't help everyone, but everyone can help someone"*

Ronald Reagan

## That's all for now

Once again, we have come to the end of this newsletter. I hope you all enjoy reading our articles and news up-dates. We would like to wish all our members and supporters a very happy Christmas and a healthy and happy 2019. We will be back again in early March with our mini news up-date, also full details of our Coffee and Chat meetings

Thank you, we would like to say a very big thank you to HSP Milners. George and his team do such a fantastic job designing and printing the newsletters for us.

*Best wishes Moyra x*



## Contacting us

There are several ways to contact us

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Ulverston, Cumbria, LA12 9RP.

Website [www.cumbriancats.co.uk](http://www.cumbriancats.co.uk) and use the contact link



*Seasons Greetings*  
*to everyone from C.A.T.S*



### **C.A.T.S. information guidelines**

Please note that all information supplied to C.A.T.S. will be used in the strictest of confidence and will not be passed on to any other source

**ALL C.A.T.S. VOLUNTEERS WORK TO STRICT CONFIDENTIALITY RULES AT ALL TIMES**

Any information produced in this newsletter is to help those people suffering with Thyroid disease.

Whilst every effort is made to provide accurate information, it is impossible to ensure that all information is relevant to every individual. No responsibility is accepted by C.A.T.S. and it is recommended and essential that if in any doubt about your condition that you should always consult your doctor, specialist physician or surgeon to seek medical advice.

**C.A.T.S. recommends that you always seek your doctor's advice**



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